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General and complete disarmament: follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament

Letter dated 26 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as coordinator for issues related to the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in New York.

I am pleased to inform that the member States of the Agency have adopted a declaration on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September 2018) (see annex),* the circulation of which as a document of the General Assembly has been requested.

I should therefore be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 101 (hh).

(*Signed*) Mauro **Vieira**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration of the member States of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September 2018)

The member States of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL),

Conscious of their historic commitment to nuclear disarmament,

Reaffirming that a world without nuclear weapons is essential for the accomplishment of the priority objectives of humanity, those being peace, security, development, and the protection of the natural environment,

Recognising that to achieve and maintain a world free from nuclear weapons is a responsibility shared by all Member States of the United Nations,

Reaffirming that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,

Reaffirming that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons are a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, a violation of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, and constitute a crime against humanity,

Proud to belong to Latin America and the Caribbean, the first densely populated region in the world that, by means of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), established a nuclear-weapon-free zone on 14 February 1967,

Recalling that the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been rigorously complied with by its States Party for more than 50 years, relying on the permanent work of OPANAL, the only international intergovernmental organization specializing in non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons,

Reiterating the full validity of the declarations on nuclear disarmament adopted by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) on 20 August 2013, in Buenos Aires; on 29 January 2014, in Havana; on 29 January 2015, in Belen; on 27 January 2016, in Quito; and on 25 January 2017, in Punta Cana,

Conscious that the Treaty of Tlatelolco and OPANAL are political, judicial and institutional references for the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones,

Reiterating also their conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is closely related to the maintenance of international peace and security and that the prohibition of nuclear weapons in different regions, adopted by sovereign decision of the States comprised therein, has a beneficial influence over other regions,

Emphasising their rejection of nuclear weapons, which, after more than 70 years of existence and use, continue to pose a risk to international peace and security and ultimately may even render the whole earth uninhabitable,

Highlighting the importance of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 4 December 2017: 72/30 "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons"; and 72/37 "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world",

which represent important political advances towards the delegitimization of nuclear weapons,

Fully aware of the obligation set forth in Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the unequivocal commitment of nuclear weapon States to negotiate effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control,

Recalling that the prohibition of nuclear weapons is a means to contribute to the elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner within clearly established timeframes and that elimination is the only truly effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,

The Member States of OPANAL,

Join in the commemoration, on 26 September 2018, of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, established by resolution 68/32 (2013) of the United Nations General Assembly;

On this occasion, the Member States:

1. ***Call attention to*** the adoption and ***recall*** the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that prohibits the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

2. ***Consider*** that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the soon entry into force of both instruments will join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on the road towards the elimination of those weapons of mass destruction in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner within clearly established timeframes;

3. ***Reiterate their concern*** over the existence of about 15 thousand nuclear weapons that pose an unacceptable threat to humankind, a danger that becomes more serious by the day;

4. ***Recall*** that this concern is reflected in numerous resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, including Res. 1 (I) of 24 January 1946, as well as in the preamble of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean of 1967, and in the preamble of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1968, and in the preamble of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons;

5. ***Also recall*** that the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD I), in 1978, affirmed in its Final Document[1] that "nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization", and such situation has not changed;

6. ***Reiterate*** the commitment of the States of the region endorsed in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace to continue to promote nuclear disarmament as a priority objective and to contribute to general and complete disarmament in order to favour the strengthening of trust between nations;

[1] A/S-10/2.

7. ***Firmly demand*** that nuclear weapons not be used again, under any circumstances by any actor, which can only be assured by the prohibition and the subsequent transparent, verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons;

8. ***Reiterate*** the call upon all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their security and defence doctrines and policies and to comply fully with their legal obligations and unequivocal commitments to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay;

9. ***Firmly demand*** that nuclear-weapon States cease the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types of these weapons, and cease to propose new scenarios and procedures for the development and employment of these arms, which is inconsistent with the obligation to adopt effective measures towards nuclear disarmament;

10. ***Call upon*** all States to refrain from carrying out nuclear weapon test explosions, or any other non-explosive experiment, including subcritical experiments for the improvement of nuclear weapons; such actions are contrary to the spirit and purposes of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), thus undermining its desired impact as a nuclear disarmament measure;

11. ***Urge*** the States included in Annex 2 to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT),[2] that have not ratified the Treaty, to take the necessary measures to do so as soon as possible;

12. ***Reiterate*** that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, is vital to the achievement of nuclear disarmament and to international security; and in this regard, ***call upon*** all States not parties to the Treaty to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States, without further delay and without conditions;

13. ***Express*** their determination to work for the success of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);

14. ***Recognize*** the essential role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and of the safeguards agreements in the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

15. ***Confirm*** the inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination;

16. ***Urge*** nuclear-weapon States that made interpretative declarations concerning Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco that are contrary to the spirit of the Treaty, to review the propositions made by OPANAL with the aim of resolving this problem in order to give full and unequivocal security assurances to the States that comprise the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to respect the militarily denuclearized character of the zone of application of the Treaty of Tlatelolco;

17. ***Underline*** the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an instrument for nuclear disarmament and, in this regard, ***encourage*** the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones by means of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned;

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[2] The People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the United States of America, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the State of Israel, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

18. ***Regret*** the more than two-decade failure to comply with the resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East,[3] an integral part of the commitments of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and of the Final Documents of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

19. ***Reiterate*** their commitment to continue to promote the dialogue and cooperation among Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, including Mongolia, through, *inter alia*, the convening, in 2020, of a fourth conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia;

20. ***Reiterate further*** their conviction that the dissemination of information concerning the danger posed by nuclear weapons is essential so that society as a whole may join the efforts for the elimination of nuclear weapons;

21. ***Undertake*** to continue to work for the implementation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education programmes, convinced that they are an effective means to contribute to the consolidation of international peace and security.

26 September 2018.

[3] NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), Annex.